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JOURNAL

OF THE

SUFFERINGS AND HARDSHIPS

OF

CAPT. PARKER H. FRENCH'S

OVERLAND EXPEDITION TO CALIFORNIA,

WHICH

Left New York City, May 13th, 1850,

AND

Arrived at San Francisco, Dec. 14.

BY WILLIAM MILES.

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TO THE READER.

The undersigned, a brother of the author of this Journal, having carefully transcribed it, by his request, and prepared it for publication, has, after much labor, succeeded, though imperfectly, with the design mainly (as his brother suggested by letter, written at San Francisco, California, dated December 20, 1850,) of realizing out of the proceeds of the sale of it sufficient for the support of his family during his absence, (one year,) after deducting expenses of publication and circulation. He therefore earnestly appeals to a philanthropic people, in support of this effort, prompted by a brother's love and pure benevolent motives, by purchasing a copy of the Journal, and by "word and deed" aid in an extensive circulation of it throughout every State, City, Town, Village and Township.

As Agents will be employed to carry it, for distribution, from house to house, and as it will be kept by the Booksellers and others for sale, all may have an opportunity of reading and treasuring up the contents of this thrilling and interesting history. It is therefore confidently hoped that no one will refuse to purchase at least one copy, as the price is so low that all may buy, however indigent.

Editors of papers are humbly solicited to give countenance and encouragement to the sale of the Journal through their editorial columns; without whose help this as well as all other enterprises aiming to promote our pecuniary welfare must inevitably fail.

The Journal is no Fiction, no Romance, no Novel, no Forgery—all is fact—all true, as has already been corroborated by other writers, members of the same Expedition, whose communications have recently been published in one-half of the States of the Union. Letters from others, lately sent home, have fully established all that is written in the Journal.

Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Ohio and Illinois, had their representatives in this fatal Overland Expedition; Canada West had her share, the Lone Star (Texas) hers; our own beloved Pennsylvania hers, and his own native town no less than fourteen, most of whom left large and helpless families behind. Will it not, then, be interesting to their *friends, neighbors, acquaintances and relatives* at home to read this, a history of what they have seen, what they have heard, what they have known, what they have felt, during this trying period of seven eventful months? Surely it will!

In conclusion, the candid reader will please not look to the grammatical construction of the Journal as an evidence of its merits, nor to what may *seem* to be contradictions or absurdities; but let forbearance be freely and cheerfully vouchsafed—the substance or abstract read and investigate. Believing that he has undertaken a work he can successfully accomplish, provided he is energetically sustained by the charitable and good, he will unceasingly labor to carry out the design in circulating the Journal, whereby the benevolent object for which it is intended may be fully and satisfactorily realized.

Respectfully yours,

WESLEY MILES.

CARLISLE, PA.

MILES' JOURNAL OF FRENCH'S EXPEDITION TO CALIFORNIA.

THE READERS of my Journal, of the sufferings, hardships, detention and disappointment, of the passengers and hired men of Parker H. French's Express Wagon Train, will remember that the newspapers throughout many parts of the Union gave publicity to the project of an "overland" expedition of French and his party to California. Indeed, such was the state of feeling, especially in the East, in favor of this route, when we landed at New York, that it was almost impossible to resist the inducements held out by Mr. French and his coadjutors. On the one hand was shown the danger and fatigue of crossing the Isthmus, belonging to a foreign power—the delays, expense, sickness and death—all had their tendency to induce us, if possible, to evade that route; on the other hand, having been induced with many others, to call on P. H. French at Tammany Hall, at his office, having previously seen his flaming and attractive advertisements, entered; he was a man of very pleasing manners and could answer any question readily to the satisfaction of all. He represented that he had some \$6000 coined from Gold sent him by a relative in San Antonio, (Texas,) who had mined it from or near the Gila river in New Mexico; that he would forfeit \$5 for every day's detention over 60 days, the time mentioned in a written agreement, proposed to convey us to San Francisco. We had to decide and decide speedily. Unfortunately we purchased a ticket at \$250 and left his office, fully satisfied with the project of the Overland Expedition.

Fathers, brothers and sons, left the society of friends. The tear was shed, the parting hand was given. Hearts beat high with golden visions; all the active employments of life were suddenly dropped. Little did some think that sickness, accidents, murder and blood shed would be their lot, ere they reached the place of destination.

I left my home, my native place of residence, Carlisle, Pa., on the 10th day of May, 1850, accompanied with thirteen others, leaving behind me a beloved wife and four helpless children. 'Twas hard to separate; but we parted, as many others of us did, and left our dear families in hope of meeting again, after visiting the land of *promised wealth*.

After having procured our necessary outfit, on the memorable 13th day of May, we went aboard the noble Steamship, the *Georgia*; soon the signal was given to move from her landing; then again the cry of "all aboard" was heard! A signal gun was fired; then the loud huzzas and shouts echoed and re-echoed. Off we went; in a little time were out sight of land. To those unaccustomed to sea life, the few first days are marked by sickness. The motion of the vessel increased as we passed on our journey, while off Cape Hatteras we had to encounter a terrible gale—all hands sought their berth or sleeping place, according to the number of their ticket, when to our surprise, no such number as we held was to be found; tickets having been issued to six hundred passengers, a great proportion steerage. As sea sickness increased, the demand for sleeping places also increased. We passed down the hold or cellar of the vessel for a mattress—no such a covering or bed as we have at home; no berth could be had—we sought in vain. Sick, we betook ourselves to lie down, wherever was found convenient. The gale continued; such a scene, as though the cook had administered poison in our victuals. The peculiar diversions incident to sea life had now lost their charms.

MAY 14th.—A fine clear morning—sickness continued, the billows still rolling, steerage fare rather poor inducement to crave the appetite, being "done up" in rather a wholesale way. A few not alarmed nor sick, are busily engaged in playing cards and taking their grog, as if seated on dry land. 15th—Sickness continues, storm abates. 16th—A beautiful morning, passengers better—off Charleston bar, South Carolina, exchange mail. 17th—Cannon fired as a signal to bring aboard the Savannah, Georgia mail. Flying fish and floating night caps to be seen in abundance—auction aboard of books, cigars, &c. 18th—The coast of Florida appears in sight. 19th—Land out of sight again; towards evening the Isle of Cuba is seen in the distance; now, again in full view of the city of Havana.

The following letter was received by Mr. Bratton and published with an editorial notice, in the *Volunteer*, of Carlisle.

LETTER FROM CUBA.—We received a few days since, the following letter from Mr. Wm. Miles, who left here in company with others, sometime since for California. It will be read with interest by his friends and acquaintances. We are glad to hear of the good health and spirits of our enterprising friends.

HAVANA, ISLAND OF CUBA, May 20, 1850.

Friend Bratton:—According to promise, I write to you. Our companies that left on the 9th and 10th, Harr, Peffer, Leidig, Hecker, Winand, Maurice, Harn, Sumnerland, Swigert, Taylor, Baily, Martin, Hutt, Rheem, and myself, took up lodgings at Tam-

many Hall, New York, and in good health and spirits started on our journey on the 13th. For our mutual benefit we concluded, if possible, to avoid crossing the Isthmus on our way to California. From good and reliable information given, we unanimously agreed to go with Capt. French's express train, by way of Orleans, Fort Lavaca, (Texas,) overland to San Francisco. I would advise all who design going to the "gold diggings," not to take steerage passage in M. O. Robert's line of Steamships. In the first place tickets were issued for the "Georgia," numbering 600. Each man was to have been furnished with a separate berth, when the fact is, there was but *two hundred and fifty*. Deliver us from such sleeping places! We all trudged down, I know not how many flight of stair to the hold, for a so-called mattress. The *grab* game had to be carried out, to get even a spot to lie down. We had to lie and sit alternately on our dirty, wet "make shift" of a bed, to secure it from being carried off by some unknown person. The boarding might have done, provided the steerage passengers had acted with decorum; but they thrust into the dishes like half-starved hogs. To get anything to eat without it being mixed like "Kale Kanon," was very difficult. The other day, in order to secure my share, I had rice, molasses, crackers, beans and soup, all in my tin plate mixed together.

We weighed anchor on Monday, at 3 o'clock, P. M. Nothing of much interest occurred in starting, except the sight of hundreds on deck, making the welkin ring with hearty cheers. Fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers, assembled to take, perhaps, the last adieu. Had you been on board, or one unaccustomed to sea faring, you would have thought the last farewell had been taken. On Tuesday night, May 14th, we had a terrific storm at sea. Never do I wish to behold another such a scene, or experience what I then felt. In passing Cape Hatteras, the noble vessel plunged, rolled and dashed, as if intelligently bent on destruction, by the force of the briny deep. Groans, sighs, heart sickness, tossing to and fro, seemed to take hold upon us, as if a general emetic had been taken. We were, too, literally swamped in our greasy mattresses, the water having gained admittance to our chambers, which is a gangway or passage on either side of the vessel. Through the mercy of Him, who has all power in heaven and earth, none perished, but rather benefitted, the writer not excepted.

May 19th—The Island of Cuba, and city of Havana, the Capitol, ushered in, beautiful to behold; health and spirits good. A Sabbath at sea is not the time or place for meditation; all bustle and confusion as we approached Havana. We now felt that the dull and monotony of sea life would soon terminate; the prospect of passing to our land route from here made all hearts glad. Now that we are anchored at Havana, I will give a brief history of things here. That a *rev*olution or *i*nsurrection exists, you need not doubt. As we neared the port, we beheld on the left the garrison manned, flags unfurled; on the right marshalling of the military, amidst the ringing of city bells, and the wild or frantic moving of the incensed populace, all in expectation of a general outbreak. Yesterday a hundred and fifty prisoners were taken and brought to the city in a steamer. Fifteen

hundred soldiers, said to be under the command of Gen. Lopez, from New Orleans, had according to report, taken Cardenas. A number of frigates, ready for action, are lying near us. The Cuban authorities will not permit us to land, though they may; we having just landed. If ever I beheld the American flag with pride, it is here! Her noble stars and stripes, waving from the topmost mast of many American vessels and ships of war, molesting none, and seeming to bid defiance to the insults of foreign "craft," whilst martial law is rigidly enforced. Many noble and patriotic hearts desire to take part or have share in assisting a down-trodden people to rid themselves of Spanish tyranny. I wish you were here, and feel as we feel, I know your unwavering devotion to Equal Rights would long to strike a blow for precious Liberty. I must now close, being confined under deck to evade the scorching sun. I shall write again when at the "diggins," if all goes well.

Respectfully, Yours,

WM. MILES.

At Havana the steamships Georgia, Falcon and Ohio were at this time, we were exchanged to the Falcon, bound for Orleans. We were held in custody by the authorities of the Island, being wrongly suspected of composing a part of the invaders. Boxes of rifles and ammunition were got out of the hold in readiness for a fight. Capt. French resolved, as did his expeditionists, not to permit our vessel to be searched, and we drove the authorities off without injury to any. Our brave Captain stood at the head, while each man armed, was ready to do his duty. A consultation was held with the American Consul, and we were finally permitted to pass on our journey. Here we laid from the 19th to the 22d of May. On the morning of the 22d we set sail for New Orleans. 23d—Sea sickness again: dirty ship, fed on musty crackers. 24th—Stormy on the Gulf of Mexico; land out of sight; evening all hands rejoiced at the sight of a light house on our right. 25th—Now being within hearing distance of land, we gave them a blast from a small piece of cannon on board; on board comes the pilot and escorts us to the "Father of Waters," the beautiful Mississippi. Never in all my life did I view such beautiful natural and artificial scenery; the growing crops of sugar cane; the beautiful farm houses, surrounded with trees and shrubbery; the small tenements of the slaves, herds of cattle grazing, and many extensive sugar manufactories. The river was full to the verge of the banks, yet none seemed to dread an inundation. Here are artificial embankments, thrown up to protect the soil below from floods. The banks are firmly secured inside by the drift wood, to break the force of the water. I was surprised to see hundreds of men, women, children and slaves labor, not thinking for a moment how soon they might be swept away. There, farms the most valu-

able, laid beneath, while we could look down from our lofty eminence, and see the ploughmen and hoers busily engaged in the cultivation of southern products. Now pass Fort Jackson, named in honor of General Andrew Jackson. On we pass upward, delighted with the beautiful birds of song, huge Alligators, lofty ships, and mountain like steamboats. In full view we beheld the shipping and mighty domes of the city of Orleans; then again the "old battle ground," where the last decisive blow was struck against Great Britain on the 8th of January, 1815. My heart was touched, while calling to remembrance years gone by; when that memorable day was celebrated by all parties, by illuminations and fire works. Those days are past, but history still lives, and will continue to tell the tale of the undaunted bravery and enthusiastic love of country of those who repelled the invading forces; and we will ever do homage to that distinguished and now sainted veteran, Jackson, who led his little band to glorious victory.

Late in the evening, landed at New Orleans. Our baggage secured on shore, under the control and supervision of Captain French, we felt ourselves once more landed safely on terra firma. 26th—Sunday, being "play day" here, laboring and professional pursuits carried on as other days. I felt here that I had passed from the bosom of my beloved country. I could not but wonder that American citizens residing in so populous a city would tolerate such conduct on the Sabbath day. I had been in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and in all my travels I never witnessed such wickedness, on a day so signally and religiously observed in the North. I wandered from street to street; the filth putrid in the extreme, lying at every step, unremoved, except by dipping it up and laying down again along the sewers to dry. No wonder that contagious diseases so disastrously afflict this renowned city! Day after day passed, while we patiently awaited the arrival of the vessel to carry us to Lavacca, Texas. To-day looked at the boiler of that ill-fated steamboat, the Louisiana, which blew up November 9, 1849, killing scores and maiming others. This evening loaded the baggage on board.

JUNE 1—After lying here six days, left for Lavacca, with many slaves aboard, who were curried with curry combs, to straighten their hair. 2d—Out of sight of land; continue under way, and land at Galveston, Texas, on the Gulf coast, on the 3d. 4th—Embarked for Lavacca, the point from which commences our overland route, where we arrived in due time and visited the camp of our former lot of passengers. Here we formed the following

COMPACT OF GOVERNMENT.

WE, the undersigned, passengers and enlisted men with French's Overland Expedition, being duly sensible of the great importance of unity, order and justice among so large a body of men crossing a vast extent of uninhabited country now before us, where we are wholly from under the reach of the wise laws that restrain us when in civilized communities, have thought best to adopt some positive form, some recognized tribunal that will decide all our disputes and punish all our crimes. With these desirable ends in view, we do hereby, with our own free will and accord, appoint the following gentlemen a standing panel of *Jurors*: Benj. Crevling, Reuben Hungerford, D. J. Vananken, Michael C. Maguire, Andrew Steel, R. Goodbody, Andrew Lindan, Russell Johnson, James Bradley, W. H. Harn, Wm. Miles, H. W. Perry, Rufus Tillon, J. D. Freeman, Edward Hunt, W. A. Peffer, Gen. A. N. Coss, J. G. Bastido, H. W. Jackson, Samuel Maxson, Jacob P. Wilkenson, Wm. Brown, Wm. J. Nelson, O. J. Calver, Austin Babcock, N. Rice, Obadiah Bouker, S. S. Booth, Griffin Chamberlain, J. R. Barker, J. Salter and ——— Pierson.

When any dispute arises among the passengers, or any of the members of the expedition, the complaint shall be made to Captain French, who shall call the jurors together, when the parties in dispute shall each choose six jurors from the standing panel above named; and the jurors so chosen shall choose one more from the same body, whose duty it shall be to give the casting vote and fix the degree of punishment to all persons found guilty, and in all cases to pronounce the decision of the jurors. A majority of the thirteen jurors so picked shall decide all cases, of whatever nature, and from their decision no appeal can be taken, the same being final. Capt. French and his company shall execute and see executed all the decisions of the jurors so picked.

All jurors are under solemn obligations to receive evidence in the usual form of oath, and to decide all cases that may come under their notice, according to the best judgment of what is right and just between man and man. The jurors by their signatures herunto attached, acknowledge that they will serve when called upon; Capt. French by his signature binds himself to execute their judgments; and the men by their signatures agree and bind themselves to stand by this compact.

Should Capt. French be one of the parties in dispute, the opposite party shall have power to make complaint direct to the jurors; and the jury, in case French is found wrong, shall have power to execute judgment on him.

A majority of the thirteen jurors so chosen shall not only decide upon the guilt of the parties in dispute, but shall specify the degree and mode of punishment to be inflicted.

Roll of Enlisted Men.—J. P. Hughes, E. Green, A. Peddis, E. Lucas, C. H. Hillick, J. Evins, N. West, R. M. Trim, H. F. Jackson, W. Hazeltine, P. J. Kernan, A. A. Tindall, J. Kerr, J. Holmes, C. Durning, A. R. Snider, S. Rounds, L. Carroll, J. Piper, L. De Lamott, H. Jackson, C. Cardinell, J. H. Clapp, C. Thurston, Dr.

D. Vaslinder, H. Smith, J. Mettler, M. Baldrige, H. M. Drum, A. Goodridge, J. Doty, J. Gorman, C. Severin, C. Boylen, M. Fox, S. Spenser, G. Barthrop, H. Flaget, W. Donn, E. Burks, P. Rhodimaker, N. Plouff, J. McDonald, S. B. Mooney, H. Gibbs, E. Schlyman, A. Waitz, F. Folly, S. W. Boyd.

Roll of Passengers.—E. C. Chappel, F. Kyes, E. Coon, W. Smith, W. E. Goodfellow, J. E. Smith, J. E. Fidler, H. H. Styles, J. H. Person, H. Armstrong, S. R. Craig, M. Grouff, H. A. Styles, S. H. Styles, L. E. Barnes, J. R. Tyson, H. Gibbs, J. Franklin, J. Holmes, E. Holmes, B. Creverling, J. Myers, W. Baylor, R. Hungerford, D. J. Vanuken, T. Vanuken, M. C. McGuire, A. Steel, M. Mines, P. Gray, T. Macin, J. McBride, J. Conlan, J. McClory, G. Simpson, R. McCormick, R. Goodbody, F. Goodbody, J. Bradley, C. Lockwood, J. Kenerdy, J. Cole, James Cole, H. Watts, J. Crever, T. Doe, A. Lindor, R. Johnson, O. Thyar, C. Chamberlin, H. H. Chamberlin, T. C. Kidder, S. Cummings, A. B. Swan, F. Brucin, J. Welsh, W. H. Harn, W. Miles, J. J. Swigert, G. Maurice, C. W. Rheem, D. Bailey, J. Taylor, J. Summerland, E. H. Rourke, H. W. Perry, R. Tillin, G. W. Brady, W. Thomas, J. D. Freeman, A. M. Wells, J. Comstock, W. Matthews, E. Hutt, T. W. Martin, W. A. Peffer, G. A. Leidich, L. Winand, A. Hecker, A. Hahr, Gen. A. N. Coss, J. H. Multon, J. G. Bastido, S. S. Smyly, A. M. Perry, C. L. Gibson, G. Chamberlin, T. B. Chamberlin, A. Cady, G. M. Cady, H. W. Jackson, R. H. Witherington, D. O. Spaulding, J. Bradford, S. Burns, C. E. Alford, W. Brown, A. W. Wright, A. Stebbens, S. Maxson, R. Hewitt, J. B. Wright, E. B. Miller, D. E. Wright, J. B. Rowell, G. S. Davis, S. S. Booth, O. J. Calver, W. A. Slack, C. A. Slack, W. S. Doyle, W. J. Nelson, G. F. Vanholland, D. Cooper, P. Walsh, B. C. Brower, J. Hare, J. B. Fortuner, A. Babcock, N. Rice, O. Bowker, F. Robinson, G. Young, L. Payne, J. B. Wilkenson, S. E. White, H. Burnam, O. S. Kenny, P. McLain, P. Callign, A. Gage and Addison Irvine.

On reaching Lavacca we found, to our surprise and disappointment, that French's representations were a total failure. Here, according to his statement, 500 broke mules were to be in readiness. The apology was that he had given Capt. Charles Naylor, of Philadelphia, a large amount of money to go to Lavacca to purchase mules, and that Naylor had deceived him. This unexpected news, this base and forged apology, was, as you may judge, a damper on our feelings. We, who had confided so unwaveringly in his word, in his arrangements to carry us through to San Francisco in sixty days, now began to suspect his integrity. What was to be done with wagons without mules or horses to draw them? Now the "tug of war" commenced. We lay here encamped from the 4th to the 16th of June. In the meantime wild mules were purchased and Mexicans employed to throw the lariat, catching them by the legs and neck; sometimes throwing them, to harness them. Day

after day passed in catching and hitching to wagons, to break them; in doing so, broke the harness and wagons. Almost out of patience at the delay, a Bull-fight was got up. He was placed in a bullock yard; the Mexicans had large fish-hooks, placed in a piece of wood, and red and blue ribbons attached, to cause anger. Then these were thrown and would stick fast in the creature, the thong of the hook holding as it would a fish. This having been done, an apron was placed before him, decorated, which the Mexican had for a front covering. Up, with astonishing bravery, the Mexican stood before the infuriated bull; at him the bull pitched, but the Mexican was the victor. A collection was taken up for the man, and the animal was permitted to pass to his native prairie.

While lying here a very heavy rain flooded the prairies over which we had to pass. Finally we started, having got our wild mules somewhat tamed for transporting our wagons. Slow indeed was our progress; we traveled some days six and others twelve miles, amidst musketoes equal to the plagues of Egypt, large and exceedingly troublesome. June 23—Sunday, arrived at Victoria, Texas; 24th, crossed the Warloop river by means of a rope ferry; a very swift stream, 150 feet wide; 25th, three deers brought into camp; 27th, nearly out of food; commissary puts us on short rations, and we are sent out to purchase provisions, but there are none to be had. 28th—No hopes of food and far from market; while a consultation is being held about what shall be done, news is brought to camp that Mexican carts were in the rear loaded with flour, which you may be sure was glad tidings. Four barrels were purchased to subsist on until our arrival at San Antonio. 29th—Reached Goliad and visited the residence of Judge Lee. Here it was Colonel Fanning and his braves fell in the memorable struggle for Texan independence. Continued our march slowly until we arrived at San Antonio.

JULY 6—I visited Colonel Crockett's fort, known as the Alamo. Here he with 200 brave men fell a murderous sacrifice to the barbarity of Santa Anna, who fell on this fort with a large army of invaders and destroyed nearly every one who manned it, while Crockett, almost alone, defended it until he too fell a martyr to Texan liberty. Here is a town built principally in Mexican style, with flat roofs, no windows, and clay floors; all work and the sleeping is done in the same room. This is the American station of the United States troops, under command of General Brooks. Population 3000. as
Now 3500 miles from New York, we lay here, at San Antonio,

day after day, repairing wagons. In passing through the town, I beheld the marks of Texan warfare; holes perforating the doors of the houses, made by an enemy with rifles and musketry. July 15—Left camp and continued our march to Casterville, population 400; a beautiful river passes here, the Madonna. To-night lost many mules and horses, stolen by the Indians, unobserved. 21st—A. Peddis, of New York city, died and was buried with religious services by Capt. French. This evening another was crushed beneath a wagon and badly injured. 22d—Encamped at Fort Clinton, commanded by Major Morrison Lincoln. 26th—Got to Leona station; twenty men left the train for Mazatlan. 27th—Crossed the Neuces river, the boundary between Texas and the “disputed territory” which led to the war between Mexico and the United States. 28th—A number of deer killed. 29th—Awakened at daybreak by an alarm being fired all around our camp by the guard, to defend the mules and cattle. Indians seen in great numbers when we were out gathering up the mules and cattle. 30th—Crossed the Zoota river and continued our march. 31st—Saw the place or caves where the Indians were driven; splendid natural architecture; the rocks fronting on the road very precipitous and represent the ruins of ancient temples; appear as if the mountains were studded by columns.

AUGUST 1—Came good speed; crossed the Devil's river, which I suppose was so named on account of the rugged roads in passing to and through it. 4th—Crossed this river four times; a wild hog shot and brought into camp; the meat tough but sweet. 6th—Prairies on fire all around us; awful and sublime to behold. 7th—No water nor supper! 8th—Got to water after traveling forty-one miles! Harris, the express mail carrier, came into camp and took our mail. It is carried by express entirely, this being the country of the Comanche and Apache Indians, from El Paso to San Antonio, some 600 miles. 10th—Lost twenty-eight mules, which were stolen, as usual, by the common depredators of the country. Subsisting on a small quantity of rice and beans, being out of flour and meal; encamped at Howard's springs. 11th—No flour yet and three hundred miles from any settlement! 12th—Crossed the Pake's river, a very swift stream, brackish and clay-colored. After traveling eight miles overtook Kugn's train, laden with Government rations. To the great joy of all, received a supply of flour, sugar and coffee. 13th—Visit Indian burying grounds and numerous canebrakes. 14th—No fresh water as yet, having used for some

days salt water; now spread our plates and cups to catch rain water to drink; caught about a gill each. To-day we were called to witness the death of a fine young man, (Chamberlain,) who was shot by accident. At our camp fire, this morning, both stood full of hope. The father had left home with his son, to assist him, as he said, in gaining a start in the world. A father's pride, he loved him sincerely; and I wonder not that he thus loved him, for he was amiable in his disposition and courteous in his manners, and indeed was beloved by us all. But alas! in an unlucky moment he received the charge of a gun (held by Thurston) in his stomach. He fell, and all he uttered was *oh! oh!* In ten minutes he was a corpse. A rude coffin was prepared, and his remains were interred with services of the Episcopal Church. The aged father wept, and we lingered at his grave until the clouds of the valley hid his remains from our view. This sad accident taught us a useful lesson, to be careful in the use of our fire arms.

August 20th we continued our march, after a few days' rest, and at 9 o'clock in the evening encamped; a report of a gun was heard, which raised quite a stir and confusion. It was our custom regularly when about to encamp, to form a circle with the tents, the wagons placed as a barricade outside. This was done that our mules and cattle, after the day's travel was over, might graze in safety within the circle, and be made secure within this *carrel* or yard, to catch with ease in the morning. Outside of this circle an Indian approached, about two hundred feet distant, having been concealed behind a cactus; approached, as is their custom, to get among the herd of mules, either to drive or frighten them away by a noise with the feet, stamping on the ground, (*stampede*), and then gather them up and take them off. We had lost very many already, and as this was a good opportunity to avenge the wrongs committed, the Indian, who saw the guard and attempted to escape, was shot in the back and killed. He was dragged into the camp as a great prize; soon he was stripped of his blanket and bracelets; laid till morning, then scalped by the prizeman. A grave about one foot deep was prepared for his carcass, and he was thrown in and covered. At the head stone was placed an appropriate painting, as indicative of the cause of slaughter; as, "this is the end of a thief."

August 21 a prairie wolf is shot and brought into camp for food. 22d—The whole train left at 10 o'clock at night, to go in quest of water; continue to travel day and night until we arrive at the pass at the source of the Olympia. 26th—A black-tailed deer shot; quite

acceptable at this time. I visited the tremendous perpendicular mountains; parts frequently fall, splitting from above. 29th—A prairie dog killed and cooked; tasted like rabbit.

SEPTEMBER 1—General dissatisfaction in camp; no water, crackers nor bacon. Horrible feelings! not knowing how or where to obtain water! At length came to the dry bed of a small stream and by digging obtained some; miserable indeed, but quenches thirst. 2d—Pass a marble mountain; stop on the way; while here Capt. French challenged Duran, the wagon master, to fight a duel, but he did not accept. 4th—Express comes back from ahead and reports 900 Indians in ambush! This news created quite a consternation; every gun and pistol was examined and loaded ready for defence. We pushed forward and arrived at our camp ground pleased with the disappointment, the enemy having fled. 5th—Friendly Indians came into camp to trade; twelve of them, a few squaws. The Captain gives them liquor and exchanges dry goods for a horse; some of the passengers trade clothes for deer skins. 6th—The Captain orders all off early in the morning with the train, to get rid of us, expecting a party of Indians to come into camp, at the usual time of starting, to monopolize the trading; but none came after we left, so that he was compelled to drive up, having gained nothing by this well-contrived operation. His disappointment created a great deal of laughter. Reached the Rio Grande river and marched up along its banks until we arrive at El Paso, after having already been on our way from 13th of May until 18th of September; mules very much emaciated, wagons broken and not safe to carry us farther. Believing that we could not get to the place of our destination this winter with such a broken down and worn out train, and now hearing, at this point, that Captain French had committed heavy forgeries, on Sunday, Sept. 22, the train crossed the Rio Grande into Mexico and encamped near the town. On the 19th inst. Mr. Boyd, assistant commissary, came from town to camp and related the following thrilling intelligence: That an express had arrived from San Antonio with the news that Howland & Aspinwall's credit had been used by Parker H. French without any authority or their signatures! French, according to this report, had contracted debts to a large amount on the way hither, for mules and supplies, presenting always a letter of credit unlimited in amount, but limited in time to six months. No such man as French was known to the firm, which was soon confirmed; first, by an order sent for McGaffin's mules, to save them from execution; and afterwards, by the Sheriff

making a levy for satisfaction on the protested draft and bill of sale. Now all comes to light; from us this infamous transaction was kept hid until our arrival at El Paso. It appears, from reliable information, that when we passed through San Antonio, Texas, 600 miles from this place, French gave a Mr. Fisk a bill of sale of the whole train, and here, at this station, obtained a warrant to arrest French, and went in pursuit to El Paso. He was driven over the Rio Grande into El Paso; or rather pursued here, and kept a body guard to save him from arrest. Here again came the "tug of war!" This sad news spread like an electric shock; we stood amazed, dumb! As the whole train was under the supervision of Mr. North West, French's first officer, and French being unwell at town, I, in company with others, called on this West and proposed to give the property into the hands of the passengers and hold it for French; but this was refused, he considering French in no such difficulty, when he had already received information of the forgery from an assistant officer, Mr. Boyd. What was to be done at this crisis? His credit was gone at the very point where he was to lay in a whole winter's provision, as well as a large number of mules and wagons! In order that 230 men (passengers and hired men) might be furnished with the means to get to California, 1000 miles distant, in general meeting assembled Hugh C. McGuire, Esq., of Illinois, was duly elected Sheriff, and three assistants, Joseph Fertner, William Hazeltine and Mr. Johnson, to make a levy on all the property belonging to the train, in behalf of the passengers, whereby their respective claims might be paid. The following is a copy of the minutes of the decision of the Jury of French's company:

At a meeting of the jury empannelled, duly elected by Captain French's company, bound for California, convened Sept. 20, 1850, for the purpose of considering the proceedings of a Convention of said company, held the day previous, upon mature and deliberate investigation of the proceedings of said convention, the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the acts, doings and proceedings of yesterday's convention of the whole company, are approved of by this jury.

Resolved, That we protest against any armed force attempting to wrest any of this property from the hands of those who are now authorized to hold it in possession.

Resolved, That if any member of this company is seen to take or known to take or secrete any animal or any other property belonging to the train, without permission from the officers holding such property in possession, he shall be subject to trial by this jury.

Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting be read aloud to a meeting of the whole company.

A protest against any armed interference in our proceedings was adopted.

W. A. PEFFER, of *Cumb'd Co., Pa*, Secretary.

MEETING OF THE COMPANY.

A meeting of Captain French's California company convened September 20, 1850, Captain O. Bouker in the Chair and W. A. Peffer, Secretary. After the chairman had stated the object of the meeting and the Secretary had read the proceedings of the jury that met a few minutes previous, the following resolution, after some discussion, was adopted:

Resolved. That if any member of this company has any property secreted, which belongs to the train, and does not return it before a legal distribution is made among all the members by the proper officers, and still desires to be considered one of the company, the property which he thus illegally retains shall be subjected to such a course of proceedings as that through which the property of others had to pass.

On motion, adjourned.

W. A. PEFFER, Sec'y.

A general call was now made for all hands to help to *carrel* the mules and guard the cattle; all was formally taken possession of by the company. A note is sent by Captain French for us to let Mr. McGuffin have his mules, that he (French) had just purchased in connection with 28 wagons, numbering in all over one hundred. Now that the old stock of French's had been reduced to skeletons by hard driving, we conceived that self-protection required us to hold on to McGuffin's purchase. The bearer of the note returned to French, who was in El Paso, with the refusal; then another note was sent, demanding all the mules and cattle, without reserve, and another refusal returned by the company. And now that French had no flour with us for our support, and his credit was gone, we concluded as soon as possible to dispose of all the property, reserving the mules for transportation or distribution. Accordingly, on Saturday, September 21, the whole was again put in motion, back to El Paso, from the camping ground, on the Rio Grande. Not yet having disposed of anything, all was confusion. Fathers now five months from home, some 5000 miles, out of means to carry them on or to return home, many having put into the hands of French \$250 passage money, and some of them having also loaned him hundreds of dollars, expecting, as he told them, that at El Paso he would refund it. Not only passengers, but still poorer men, who had by hard labor saved \$100, put that, each of them, about fifty men, into his hands, as a pledge that they would stay and labor six months. What was to be done in this extremity? His pledges had all been broken. The time to carry us to San Francisco was sixty days.

Seeing now as their only hope to get to California, to divide all the property useful to them, sell the balance to purchase provisions and proceed.

A committee was elected to effect sales day after day ; some goods were sold to the Sheriff of El Paso, three wagons to the Mexican Consul and so on, until when all was summed up, only 20 per cent could be realized. The claims were from \$100 to \$700. Thus, the reader can judge of our destitute and helpless condition. All over, parties consisting of various numbers started ; first procuring a mule to carry baggage and scant provisions ; others more careful of their money were able to purchase two mules, one for riding, at rates from \$15 to \$50 each. When arrangements had been made by French, for hands to go with him ahead of our train of pack mules through Mexico to California, and when 70 miles on his way commenced the work of a *Guerilla*. Not being satisfied with the time and money of all, he commenced robbing with his band of desperadoes, of guns, mules and money. First he and his party intimidated with harsh words, and then Colt's revolvers are buckled on, ready to assassinate any who would show resistance. Here is an evidence of his barbarity and lawlessness. He found one who had been a guide, useful in helping us onward to our destination ; from him he took his blankets, and sold his clothes to his assistant pirates at public auction. Done with him, sparing only his life, he proceeded on in his fiendish purposes, until at Carletus, 160 miles from El Paso, when after taking an old mule from a poor cripple, the one who had been so severely injured by the wagon passing over his breast, crushing and breaking his ribs. Having come on a small party, for remember he took advantage of the few, the work of death commenced. He, the Captain of the *Geurilla* band, for that he termed himself, and said he was above all Law, for here there is none ; and is determined to wash his hands in the blood of the officers of the "distribution." I say he came on a small party on the bank of a creek, one-half a mile west of Carletus, surrounded them with his band, October 7. Resistance was made and French had his arm shattered, another wound in the stomach ; Daniel E. Wright, of Norwich, Vermont, was killed in the battle ; William J. Nelson of Manchester, New Hampshire, shot and died same evening ; John Holmes of Caanan, Maine, had both arms broken ; David Cooper of Wooster, Ohio, shot in the hip, who may recover. The wounded were hauled to town ; medical aid was sent for to Yanus, but none could be obtained. Some forty of his passengers, hired men and

guerrillas have sought refuge in our camp, we having passed first early in the morning; from the refugees obtained the information given. From them we learned that French and two of the wounded were living, and little hopes of any recovering but Mr. Cooper.

The following certificates were given me, which I will give:— We, the undersigned, having witnessed the several scenes and sufferings of the above described individuals, as well as all the transactions of French's passengers and hired men and Guerillas, until the termination of the war at Carletus on the 7th of October, 1850, certify the foregoing Journal to be true and correct.

Charles Cardinell, Belleville, Canada West;

John Hayward, New York;

John W. Donnell, New York;

James Kerr, Colbourn, Canada West;

A. A. Pindall, Oxford, Oakland county, Michigan;

Ford Valty, San Antonio, Texas;

James Pifer, Colbourn, Canada West;

Cromwell Chamberlain, Waterford, Vermont;

Franklin Robinson, Bennington, New Hampshire;

Caleb Tharston, Lancaster, Worcester county, Mass.;

Otis J. Calver, Norwich, Vermont;

J. S. Booth, Norwich, Vermont;

Gardner S. Davis, Norwich, Vermont;

Thomas C. Kidder, Barnet, Vermont.

Certificate of Thomas W. Boyd, Assistant Commissary.

I certify that I served in the capacity of Assistant Commissary for P. H. French, from Victoria, Texas, to Elpaso, Texas, connected with his California Express Train, from New York, destined to San Francisco. That he, P. H. French, did have and carry his Iron Safe in the Commissary's wagon, which I had charge of, and that he or his Assistants had been at the Safe one night and left out some papers which I saw and read; one of which was a letter of credit, purporting to have been given French by Howland & Aspinwall of New York city, unlimited in amount but limited to six months; that I was sent to Camp by General Coss, one of the passengers, to inform Rufus Sillue and others of the fact, that an express had arrived from San Antonio, which brought a protest from the hands of Howland & Aspinwall, of N. York, signed by their Clerk, stating that they had never authorised such man as P. H. French to draw upon them for the payment of money.

THOMAS W. BOYD.

October 8—In company, visited the Garrison at Hanus. The soldiers had left for Carletus; drums and cannon and every fixing, in true Mexican style. Here I am more than ever fully convinced that religious and political liberty, the great elements of National greatness, are the only correct basis of "Virtue, Liberty and Independence." October 9—Left camp and travelled twenty-eight miles

through a magnificent country. 10th—Continued our travel and found rain water on our way, in small standing pools; quite a delicacy to the weary travellers, parched with thirst in this Southern climate. 11th—Now the Rocky Mountains before us, and we determinedly resolve to go ahead as long as our strength will hold out. Commenced our march early as usual. On, on, we went on this "Col. Cook's route"—by this route wagons had gone to the Colorado; some weeks before us which we overtook there. At first the Mountains seemed quite easy to cross; but before we were over we struck the prairies once more, which was quite a welcome treat; travelled 20 miles. 12th—At noon while engaged in packing our mules, we were suddenly attracted by the report of a gun in our rear. 'Twas from one of a party in advance, who had been lost in the mountains with nine others. They had divided their last provisions, now providentially released by us. A history of their adventures was related to me, which I will reserve for a future occasion. Four days sorrowful march passed, ourselves and mules nearly on an equal footing as regards scanty fare. 15th—A wild bull shot; his meat was excellent and weighed about 1000 pounds. 17th—Reached Santa Cruza, a Mexican town and Military station. The Apaches had made an attack on this town about two weeks ago, killing many and taking many prisoners. 18th—Saw twenty black tailed deer, a herd of wild horses and a flock of wild turkeys; killed none. 19th—Entered a depopulated town of some note.—There seemed to be the mouldering remains of an ancient Cathedral. A part of the Cross still stands to tell the story that Christianity had been planted here, but the enemies of the weak and unprotected had committed their ravages and destroyed what had been built up in remembrance of Christian adoration.

We left this deserted town, Tobac, and fell on an Indian trail, passing on this some nine miles came to water, where the advance party, "Hutt," of Carlisle, and company had been the day before and left their "card." This gave us great encouragement. Having no guide, we went on until dusk, when at a distance ahead we saw first one camp fire, then others. Many suffering for water, we neared the camp fires, and to the joy of all hands water was here. This was the advance party encamped; they got sight of us, raised a "halloo" which spread back through our train and made the welkin ring. We halted and looked around to see our neighbors—20 Indians of the Pimos tribe, came to us; we found them very friendly, fine well built men and armed. Our first business in order was

to get something to eat. We solicited provisions of these Indians, who sold us some meat of a mountain goat, very palatable and delicious. As much could be purchased for one-fourth of a dollar as for a dollar, as they know not the difference in value—know nothing about the use of silver coins. Supper ended, we were soon wrapped in the arms of Morpheus, and slept soundly. A regular guard, as usual, was kept up. Nothing of interest took place, until while on our way to Santa Rosa,—here we had fine sport after mountain goats on the prairie, but killed none. On we went, until we reached the base of a mountain; we ascended and when descending the other side on a narrow trail we met about twenty more Indians, well mounted and armed; we checked our speed, reached out the hand of friendship: it was generously reciprocated, and on they went on their journey and we on ours. We looked back and beheld as many different appearance in dress and decorations as letters in our alphabet. I suppose they were clad according to their rank or bravery.

Continued our march over a widely extended prairie; then again entered the mountains in search of water. Fatigued in a Southern climate and wandering at 10 o'clock at night, without water for ourselves and mules; got on a trail, followed it until we arrived at a pool of good water; here was joy inexpressible; weary travellers can better feel it than describe. Travelled on about a mile further in search of grass; some halted here where grass was found, for the night, while others wandered on on foot as long as their strength would permit, and that of their animals. Think it not strange when I say that many, very many travelled on foot, for many had not means to purchase more than one mule, as I before remarked, and this one was used to carry baggage. Now came on extreme suffering from lameness; fears were now entertained that we would never arrive at our place of destination, and must inevitably perish in a wild, lonely and uninhabited country. But all did not thus reason: hope had not yet been extinguished: a spark still was left: the less dispirited encouraged the faltering: the strong assisted the weak—each mutually shared the hardships, while none selfishly took care of himself only. We can boastingly say with truth that we are representatives of the unconquerable Americans; no suffering nor hardships can daunt them; on they go, with the adage, "be sure you are right, then go ahead!"

The forward division with which I am connected moved on, but having missed the direct road or trail at the mountain referred to, we wandered to, and fro like lost sheep—at one time going South, then

North, afterwards strike a trail on which were the visible tracks of mules and horses ; we followed it, which led to an Indian wigwam. I was now satisfied that Northern Yankees can more easily follow a broad frequented wagon road, directed by index boards, than Indian trails east of the Rocky Mountains in Mexico. Here we got water, tried to buy melons for money ; when presented they laughed at us, treating us as though they were independently wealthy, or that our cash was of no value. We could effect no exchange either—we could not converse with them and had no interpreter. By signs we were directed on our course by the old inmate of the house, but got no melons or nothing else.

Continued on our march to a village of Indian huts of the Maracopas tribe. Out rushed these native sons of the forest, and looked upon us as wildly as though we had came from the clouds. They were very friendly ; as usual repeated our accustomed salutations, shaking hands as old friends when meeting, after being separated for years. The men and women were almost in a state of nudity. We left, passed on in search of water ; village after village appears ; we felt that truly we had passed from the land of civilization and the fine arts. Houses are built circular, shaped somewhat like a cupalo ; the door or entrance is about three feet in height, and two in width. Corn, beans, pumpkins and melons are principally cultivated, the only articles for food and use, and articles of commerce. The tribes further South, as we travelled on, committed rather an uncharitable act towards some of us—one had his last coat stolen—another his only vest coat ; articles of less value taken ; no resistance was made, as discretion was the better part of valor. We called for water, “ owa ; ” water was furnished us, but invariably demanded pay for it in the way of clothes, red flannel, of which they were excessively fond, and muslin shirts ; money was indignantly refused.—Here we were enabled to lighten our baggage.

We continued trading for food and water, and now desired the services of a guide to conduct us to water for our mules. No one would offer, until one individual had to take off his red shirt to pay him ; our mules had now been two entire days without water. Afterwards procured another guide further on for \$10, to conduct us to the river Gila. We arrived here in the midst of a people that bespeak intelligence and good behavior. Their lands are irrigated by water, conveyed in trenches from the Gila ; very fertile and beautiful country. Now quietly and comfortably seated in camp, we are surrounded by peaceable and well behaved people, large and very

athletic, without those peculiarities known amongst savages. While I am writing, mothers nearly as naked as when born, are seated with their children at their breasts. Here I must draw a contrast between the females of civilization and those of this land. At one time I saw one female after another pass along, while travelling from village to village, with a pack saddle resting on their backs and fastened or hitched secure to their foreheads, carrying a load enough for a mule. They walk with a quick pace bent forward. A party of five men mounted, passed us; on foot followed a female, heavily laden as above described. Indeed, the women and girls seem to do all the drudgery. Novel sight, to be sure, for a citizen of the U. S. to behold! It is well for us to spend a little time to see how far superior our situation at home is to that we find abroad.

Having traded here for food, we took up the line of march for the Colorado river. Being informed that we could on our way get provisions, we therefore laid in no supply at this point. On our arrival on the banks of this beautiful stream, to our surprise, found that the representations of the Indians were false. None was to be had for some eighty men. After crossing the Colorado some 800 feet wide, paying for ferriage \$1 per man and \$2 for mules, we learned that the Governor of California had sent General Moorhead of the militia there to guard that point, until the arrival of the United States Troops. He had an engagement with the Indians and drove them from their homes and their fields, which were covered with a growing and ripening crop of beans, pumpkins, &c. 'Twas here we hungry pilgrims resorted. We who had been accustomed to good regular living at home went into vegetable diet with smiling countenances. We laid here for one day and continued our journey over a barren, sandy desert country; now and then leaving a hungry worn-out mule to die on the plains, as many had done, as we saw. Met a company of United States troops, under the command of Captain ———, from whom we obtained one-half pound of hard bread to a man, which was very delicious, having ate little else than beans for ten or twelve days.

From October 19 to November 3, I have given no daily accounts of our travels. The reader may judge, that it was during this period, no man could have, under all the trying circumstances, any leisure or sufficient composure of mind, to note daily transactions; besides, this being a sufficient reason for this omission, we, on account of being lost again and again, had almost forgotten the day of the week, and our attention being unusually drawn to new sights and

new scenes, having travelled over an almost unfrequented road, in the midst of mountains, over vast prairies and sandy plains.— This being, I trust, a sufficient apology, I pass on to notice the ending of our journey.

NOVEMBER 3—One of our party robbed by an Indian at night; bought some food from a Mexican. The wolves in great abundance around us, howling most terrifically. Had to pay this extortioner \$1 for three pints of corn meal, and the same amount for five pints of beans. Arrived at Viccetus the American supply port for provisions, under the command of Major S. P. Heintzlemen, a gentleman worthy of his station. From him we obtained one day's rations—'twas all he could spare. Now again, all out of hopes of getting sufficient provisions, except by purchasing, many of our party destitute of money, suffered from want of means to buy, and had to depend on the liberality of their more fortunate companions in distress. Here I would remark that it would be but an act of justice and humanity on part of the United States Government to encourage emigration by this route, by establishing a permanent provision post at this point, and all along the route. Was a saving effected of unnecessary expenditure, and assistance rendered, by this means, to such as desire to go this route, "soon the wilderness and desolate places would be made glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose."

November 16—Landed at San Diego, the welcome termination of our overland route. Here I stood and viewed the mighty expanse of the Pacific ocean, while the shipping at the harbor carried my thoughts back to New York and New Orleans. Over 1800 miles overland of eventful scenes we have passed, commencing at Lavacea in Texas and ending at San Diego on the Pacific. But I stop not to particularize, not to lament, not to wish myself back to the bosom of my family. I started for San Francisco and I intend to reach it; more, I started for the Gold Mines and I intend at least to see them.

To return, San Diego has some 500 inhabitants, with a goodly number of Americans. Gambling is the order of the day here. I wished to gain some information and passed into a groggery. A roulette occupied the centre of the room. "Poker," billiards and drunkenness compose the principal business of the town. Second door above was a magistrate's office. He was very busy in trying cases in his own style! Then did I compare, in my own mind, my beloved Pennsylvania, her wholesome laws to prevent and punish crime, and her law-abiding people, with those of California. How

high, how noble her stand against gambling! May she continue her glorious march of reform laws as long as the glorious Union shall be bound together, which I hope may continue until earth's drama shall be wound up.

After disposing of our mules we took passage in the brig Victorine for San Francisco on the evening of November 22d, and arrived safe on the 14th of December. The second division of the passengers arrived and tell the history of their extreme suffering, having been lost for five days without food and water, and killed a mule at last for food, and drank his blood to quench the violence of thirst. They likewise buried a young man at sea. The third division, and last, arrived same day, having also buried a man at sea. Both divisions, including ours, were fearfully cut down in numbers. What a contrast between now and when we started! Here, at San Francisco, we meet each other in the streets and feel as though we had arisen from the dead. Seven long months have passed away since we embarked at New York city—sixty days was the time contracted to bring us hither by Capt. French, but we were sadly deceived! But why complain? It is all past as a dream; it cannot be recalled.



